

# IOWA BIRD LIFE

PUBLISHED QUARTERLY BY THE  
IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION

VOL. XXIX

DECEMBER, 1959

NO. 4



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The Iowa Ornithologists' Union was organized at Ames, Iowa, February 28, 1923, for the study and protection of native birds and to promote fraternal relations among Iowa bird students.

The central design of the Union's official seal is the Eastern Goldfinch, designated State Bird of Iowa in 1933.

Publications of the Union: Mimeographed letters, 1923-1928; "The Bulletin," 1929-1930; "Iowa Bird Life," beginning 1931.

**SUBSCRIPTION RATE:** \$2.00 a year. Single copies 50c each. Subscription to the magazine is included in all paid memberships, of which there are four classes, as follows: Contributing Member, \$10.00 a year; Supporting Member, \$5.00 a year; Regular Member, \$2.00 a year; Junior Member (under 16 years of age), \$1.00 a year.

EDITORIAL AND PUBLICATION OFFICE  
WINTHROP, IOWA

## SOME NOTES ON THE HAYDEN PRAIRIE, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO HENSLOW'S SPARROW

By J. HAROLD ENNIS

Cornell College

MOUNT VERNON, IOWA

(With photographs by Fred W. Kent)

The ornithological notes of William Youngworth not only carry the air of authenticity, but frequently tempt the interest and imagination of his readers. Several of us had privately discussed Mr. Youngworth's notes on the Hayden Prairie (Iowa Bird Life, XXV: 13-14) and his earlier references to the western counterpart, the Kalsow Prairie (Iowa Bird Life, XXI: 67-68 and XXIII: 73-74). We were thus anxious to see real prairie, even a prairie remnant, and from it try to visualize the native majesty of the original Iowa. In particular we hoped that we might see the Henslow's Sparrow, which had been seen in both prairie areas.

In the early afternoon of June 13, 1959, Fred Kent and Thomas Morrissey of Iowa City, Dr. Robert F. Vane of Cedar Rapids, and the writer started our north-east Iowa safari. Our immediate objective, the Hayden Prairie, is located in the northeast and southeast quarters of Chester Township in Howard County. This was the first state-owned prairie tract acquired by Iowa. After the death in 1950 of Dr. Ada Hayden, distinguished teacher of botany at Iowa State for 40 years and an ardent advocate of conservation, this preserve of about 200 acres was formally named the Ada Hayden Prairie by the State Conservation Commission. (Two of Dr. Hayden's able reports urging the public acquisition of "Prairie Areas" are found in Vol. 51, pp. 43-48, and Vol. 52, pp. 127-148, of the Proceedings of the Iowa Academy of Science.)

Driving north on Highway No. 63 to Davis Corners, the approximate center of Howard County, one turns west for 4 miles and north for 5 miles to reach the area. We finally arrived in the late afternoon, early enough to inspect the boundaries of the tract and make a few observations.

Our first impression was the sheer richness and variety of the vegetation. Largely treeless except for a line of willows at the western edge of the west segment of the tract, these rolling prairie acres contained a mass of uncommon and rare plants. Truly it was a living botanical museum!

Our appreciation of this point was enhanced by the inclusion in our party of a botanist, Thomas Morrissey. It was his impression that the preserve was a rather typical "Tall-Grass" prairie dominated by big bluestem (*An'ropogon gerardii*) and slough grass (*Spartina pectinata*) in the moister portions, and little bluestem (*A. scoparius*) and porcupine grass (*Stipa spartea*) on the drier ridges and hills. The very moist swale was generally grown up in sedges (*Carex*). Along a small stream in the low area to the southwest was a good stand of willows (two species) and a few aspen. Other woody plants were dwarf willow (*Salix humilis*), lead plant (*Amorpha canescens*), and rose. According to Mr. Morrissey, some of the unusual or striking species would include the ladyslipper (*Cypripedium parviflorum*), the pasque-flower (*Incumone patens*), a blue vetch (*Ficia* sp.), rattlesnake-master (*Eryngium yuccaefolium*), and shooting-star (*Dodecatheon meadia*).

This uniqueness of plant life suggested an equally unique association with birds. Our immediate observations verified this relationship. Although it was late in the day, songs of three or four Grasshopper Sparrows (*Ammodramus savannarum*), several Savannah Sparrows (*Passerculus sandwichensis*), and finally the Henslow's Sparrow (*Passerherbulus henslowii*) were heard. The last mentioned was a species new to all four of us.

*Passerculus henslowii* (Audubon), or Henslow's Sparrow, is listed in the last (1957) A. O. U. Check-List of North American Birds as occurring in "Eastern South Dakota, central Minnesota, Wisconsin . . . southern Illinois, central Missouri, and eastern Kansas." No reference is made to Iowa, but this state is obviously encircled by records of this species.

Iowa writers leave the status of Henslow's Sparrow in some confusion, which is not fully explained in terms of the passage of time and the disappearance of the prairie vegetation. Keyes and Williams regarded it as a common summer resident. Lynds Jones, a former resident of Poweshiek County, is quoted in Davie's "Nests and Eggs of North American Birds" as saying it is a breeding bird found in neglected fields and pastures in Iowa. DuMont calls it "a fairly rare migrant," and says, "there are no recent breeding records." He adds, "Either this bird has been overlooked by present observers or it has decreased considerably in numbers during recent years." Probably both are true.

Some writers, including Dr. T. S. Roberts, refer to Henslow's Sparrow as a bird of the wet meadows. While we did hear one sing in the moister southwest portion of the Hayden tract, they were also heard on the higher ground to the northeast. The song of this diminutive bird well matches its size; it may well be the shortest song on record. Certainly it appears to be the briefest song recorded in "A Field Guide to Bird Songs", the new field aid by Kellogg, Allen, and Peterson.



HENSLOW'S SPARROW ON SINGING PERCH  
Photographed in the rain, Hayden Prairie, June 14, 1959.

Two characteristics of the bird are definitive, the singing posture and the song itself. When the song was heard, we usually were able to spot the bird on top of some weedstalk. There it uttered its brief notes with a quick tilt of its head upward. This was done at so sharp an angle it appeared to cast its notes immediately above its head. The weak song, once heard, would hardly be confused with that of other birds. It is a kind of hiccupping *tsi-lick* (according to Peterson) or *tser-zwick* (according to Roberts). Any English language equivalent is a poor description.

We remained on the prairie until 3:30 p.m., and the Henslow's were still singing after sundown. The thin little call sometimes came with an astonishing regularity, about nine or ten calls per minute according to Dr. Vane. It was rather remarkable how so weak a call would carry across the prairie.

Although it rained the next morning, we were back in the prairie as soon as the heavier downpour had ceased. The heavy, wet vegetation was not encouraging for a long hike. However, we walked the margins, taking note again of the songs of Henslow's, Grasshopper and Savannah Sparrows. At least six singing Henslow's were heard at different spots during the two trips into the tract. Ten or twelve Savannahs and five or six Grasshopper Sparrows were singing during the same surveys. A few photographs were



GRASSHOPPER SPARROW NEST ON HAYDEN PRAIRIE, JUNE 14, 1959

taken by Mr. Kent and Dr. Vane, possibly the first pictures of the Henslow's in Iowa. Also, a Grasshopper Sparrow nest with young was discovered.

The three native sparrows suggest a close bond with the native Iowa prairie association. They probably are as "Iowan" as the bluestem. Other birds, of course, were noted on the Hayden Prairie—Bobolinks, a flying Kestrel, and even an "un-prairie-like" Red-headed Woodpecker. But we are sure that in our mental image of early Iowa, the little Henslow's Sparrow has a prominent place.

It might be well to close these notes with a comment on the origin of the Henslow name. Audubon discovered and first named the bird Henslow's Bunting (*Emberiza henslowii*). In his Ornithological Biography (Vol. I, p. 360) he said the bird was obtained "opposite Cincinnati, in the State of Kentucky," in 1820. "It was on the ground, amongst tall grass . . . . Perceiving it to be different from any which I had seen, I immediately shot it, and the same day made an accurate drawing of it . . . In naming it after the Rev. Prof. Henslow of Cambridge, a gentleman so well known to the scientific world, and who has permitted me so to designate it, my object has been to manifest my gratitude for the many kind attentions which he has shewn towards me. Its history and habits are unknown . . . ."

The "Rev. Prof." or John Stevens Henslow was born in 1796 in the British Isles and died in 1861. He is probably best remembered as a botanist, although he was competent throughout natural history, especially in entomology and conchology. In 1822 he became Professor of Mineralogy at Cambridge University. Two years later he took orders in the Anglican Church, becoming curate of St. Mary the Less at Cambridge. In 1827 he became Professor Botany, a position he held for the rest of his life. One of his most famous, and favorite, pupils was Charles Darwin. In fact, it was the Rev. Prof. Henslow who recommended Darwin as the naturalist for the world-famous trip aboard the Beagle.

Thus our rare little native sparrow, the Henslow's, is bearing a very distinguished name.



GENERAL VIEW OF HAYDEN PRAIRIE

## THE BALD EAGLE IN THE UPPER MISSISSIPPI VALLEY

By JAMES HODGES

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CLINTON, IOWA

Among the many birds of the middle-west prairie region none seems to equal the status of the Bald Eagle in fascinating the eye of the observer and capturing his imagination. To some of us the arrival of the first eagle in late fall, in a symbolic fashion, marks the start of the winter season in the Upper Mississippi Valley.

During the past five years, accounts of the presence of this bird have appeared frequently in the popular press. In view of this increased attention by the public at large, it seems that a summation of the historical occurrence and present status of this species in the Upper Mississippi Valley may be in order.

### EARLY HISTORY

Among the earliest references to the Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) is that of John Krider, who wrote in 1879: "I have found them breeding . . . in Iowa and Minnesota, but have never found more than two eggs in a nest." An interesting fact is that J. A. Allen did not note this species in his account published in 1869; this listed his observations on birds observed in western Iowa and northern Illinois.

A number of observers writing prior to 1900 noted the presence of the Bald Eagle. Keyes and Williams, in their list of Iowa birds published in 1889, reported the Bald eagle as "rare," and observed that young had been taken at various times and kept in confinement for two or three years.

In the same year of the publication of the first catalog of Iowa birds, Robert Ridgway, in his Ornithology of Illinois, wrote: "Along all the larger water-courses in our state the Bald Eagle is a more or less common bird, and may be met with at all times of the year."

Charles R. Keyes, in summarizing the status of Iowa Raptores in 1897, wrote in reference to the Bald Eagle: ". . . it is not as common in Iowa as formerly and can scarcely be classed as a common bird here. However, pairs of these eagles are frequently seen along our water courses, especially in the early spring, and occasional pairs are known to build in the state." A summer observation of this bird was made by Paul Bartsch, in Allamakee County, on June 28, 1896.

Prior to the turn of the century, W. W. Cooke, in summarizing bird migration in the Mississippi valley, wrote of the status of this species: "It has no regular migration, but after breeding throughout the Mississippi Valley it disappears from some places for the winter, while it remains at others. Generally speaking, it leaves the North when the freezing of the waters prevents it from getting its accustomed food, but sometimes remains through the winter even as far north as latitude 47° in Minnesota, where, in the heavy pine forests, I have found it throughout the year, and where it nests quite commonly. In the spring of 1884 it moved back to summer quarters in northern Iowa about March 20."

### THE LAST HALF CENTURY, 1900-1951

During the period 1900-1951 an observation of a Bald Eagle was considered of sufficient importance to warrant a published note. During this 50-year period three important works on the birds of Iowa were published, and these summarized the status of the bird at the time. These three important contributors were:

RUDOLPH M. ANDERSON (1907)— "The Bald Eagle was formerly common in Iowa and frequently nested in favorable localities. At the present time it can only be considered as tolerably common along the larger water-courses during migrations, and occasionally during the winter. A nesting pair is of very exceptional occurrence in the state." Anderson also cites Bendire who secured an egg of this species which was from a set of two obtained at Alden, Iowa, April 18, 1873.

BERT HEALD BAILEY (1918) — This observer found evidence that made him conclude the Bald Eagle remained occasionally through the winter, but the arrival of spring and the breaking up of ice on the larger rivers caused the northward movement of eagles in conjunction with the migration of waterfowl. He also concluded: "Though nesting much less frequently in Iowa than in former years, there is little doubt that the Bald Eagle still finds suitable nesting sites and hunting grounds in some parts of the state." Bailey also lists a record of an immature bird collected at Letts, Iowa, June 12, 1915.

PHILIP A. DU MONT (1933)— "An uncommon migrant along the larger rivers of the state, less numerous through the interior; occasionally found in winter."

There is one significant observation common to all three of these authors. The Bald Eagle is found only "occasionally" along the larger rivers during the winter. This status apparently remained unchanged for 50 years, for as recently as 1941 (Downing), 1944 (Ayres) and 1945 (Ennis, Hodges) we find published notes on the occurrence of this bird during the winter season.



CLIFF WHERE BALD EAGLES NESTED IN ALLAMAKEE COUNTY

This photograph, taken about 1887, shows a nesting cliff on the north side of Yellow River in Post Township, Allamakee County. The nesting ledge is marked by the arrow, and remnants of the old nest are visible although the nest had not been used for many years. (Reprinted from Iowa Bird Life, June, 1937, issue, page 19).

Table 1. Bald Eagles Reported on Christmas Censuses in Iowa, as Published in Iowa Bird Life.

Year	Total	Davenport	Dubuque	Harper's Ferry	Marshalltown	Eldora	Des Moines	Clinton
1930	1	1	....	....	....	....	....	....
1931	0	None recorded for State						
1932	0	None recorded for State						
1933	0	None recorded for State						
1934	0	None recorded for State						
1935	0	None recorded for State						
1936	0	None recorded for State						
1937	0	None recorded for State						
1938	0	None recorded for State						
1939	0	None recorded for State						
1940	0	None recorded for State						
1941	1	....	1	....	....	....	....	....
1942	0	None recorded for State						
1943	4	....	3	....	....	....	....	....
1944	1	....	....	....	....	....	....	....
1945	5	3	....	....	....	....	....	....
1946	4	2	....	....	....	....	....	....
1947	9	....	9	....	....	....	....	....
1948	8	4	3	....	....	....	....	....
1949	14	6	6	....	....	....	....	....
1950	47	44	2	....	....	....	....	....
1951	11	13	1	....	....	....	1	....
1952	25	25	....	....	....	....	....	....
1953	52	46	3	2	1	....	....	....
1954	11	5	1	1	2	1	1	....
1955	28	17	11	....	....	....	....	....
1956	86	84	2	....	....	....	....	....
1957	85	31	4	....	....	....	....	50
1958	120	114	2	....	....	....	....	3

Year	St. Vernon	Dyersville	Davis Co.	Cedar Falls	Ottumwa	Waterloo	Lansing
None recorded at these stations, 1930 to 1942, and 1952 to 1956.							
1943	....	....	....	....	1	....	....
1944	1	....	....	....	....	....	....
1945	....	....	....	1	....	1	....
1946	....	....	....	1	1	....	....
1947	....	....	....	....	....	....	....
1948	1	....	....	....	....	....	....
1949	....	....	2	....	....	....	....
1950	....	1	....	....	....	....	....
1951	1	....	....	....	....	....	....
1957	....	....	....	....	....	....	....
1958	....	....	....	....	....	....	1



The first indication of a change taking place in relative abundance as a wintering bird, is found in a paper published in *Iowa Bird Life* in 1943 by Harlan. It was recorded that concentrations occurred around open water below various dams on the Mississippi River, with as many as 15 birds present.

The change in numbers of this bird as a winter visitor is shown by the data presented in Table 1. It was in 1950 that the first large concentrations of wintering birds were reported. However, there have been no reliable nesting records reported since 1892 (Du Mont).

Some people believe the Bald Eagle is on the path to extinction. Although there is some evidence that the Bald Eagle population is declining in the southern and eastern portions of the United States, there is little evidence of a decline in the upper Mississippi valley. An alleged population decline is based on the premise that fewer immature birds are observed than in the past.

Some observers, writing of conditions in Florida and the eastern United States, present evidence to support their conclusion that there are fewer immature birds each year. This is not necessarily true of the Northern race which inhabits the northern portion of this continent and the wintering population of the upper Mississippi valley.

As a matter of interest my observations for a period of ten wintering seasons are summarized in Table 2. The only conclusion to be drawn from this small sample is that the numbers of wintering immature birds are consistently less than the adults. However, no trend can be determined of fewer immatures.

Table 2. Summary of Bald Eagle Observations in Scott County, Iowa, Area.

Winter Year	1st Seen	Last Seen	Adult	Immature	Total
1945 - 1946	Dec. 16	Feb. 23	7	3	10
1946 - 1947	Dec. 21	Feb. 22	7	4	11
1947 - 1948	Nov. 28	Apr. 18	11	....	11
1948 - 1949	Nov. 25	Feb. 27	18	5	23
1949 - 1950	Dec. 3	Mar. 26	55	2	57
1950 - 1951	Nov. 26	Feb. 19	83	5	88
1955 - 1956	Dec. 10	Mar. 3	10	5	15
1956 - 1957	Dec. 16	Mar. 4	13	....	13
1957 - 1958	Nov. 26	Mar. 2	54	3	57
1958 - 1959	Dec. 7	Mar. 7	67	33	100

Perhaps the greatest man-made influence on the relative abundance and distribution of the birds of the upper Mississippi valley is the series of dams constructed by the United States Corps of Army Engineers. The dams hold the 9-foot channel for navigation. Rapid fluctuations in the river level, especially winter draw-downs, many times cause the death of fish. Excellent feeding areas for Herring and Ring-billed Gulls are made, and the status of the eagle certainly has been affected also.

In 1900 Burtis H. Wilson found the Bald Eagle to be a rare straggler in Scott County, Iowa. Today it is common. The eagle population is best described by Frank Bellrose, game specialist for the Illinois State Natural History Survey, who wrote me on March 5, 1959, summarizing his eagle observations: "In 1954, we enumerated 56 eagles between St. Louis, Missouri, and Rock Island, Illinois. In 1955, 87 Bald Eagles were counted in the same region; 40 of these were between Muscatine and Oquauka. In 1957, 288 Bald Eagles were observed from Chester, Illinois, to Rock Island; only 2 of these were between Chester and St. Louis. On January 10, 1959, 176 Bald Eagles

were counted between St. Louis and Rock Island. Only 8 of these were above Keokuk, Iowa, and 52 were just above Grafton and 63 immediately below the Keokuk dam." It is apparent that this population change has taken place in the course of a decade.

In 1943 Harlan summarized the habits of eagles wintering along the Mississippi River. I should like to supplement his observations with the following observations:

The eagle is principally a fish-eater, usually eating dead fish. Live fish are usually taken from a Herring or Ring-billed Gull. Some will prey on crippled ducks. One eagle was wounded in Macedonia, Iowa, while trying to steal a chicken.

There are usually several instances of wintering eagles being found disabled. Some are nursed back to health while others die. In the past ten years I have found only one bird that had been shot and wounded. This bird was nursed back to health and released.

An unusual incident involving an eagle was reported in the local press. An employee of a construction company was walking along the bank of the Mississippi River one winter day. He was wearing a cap which was covered on the outside with fur. While walking he felt a blow on his head and turned to observe an eagle flying away with his cap in its talons! This is better than the report of an eagle carrying a baby to its nest.

Table 3. Number of Bald Eagles Observed in Tri-City Area and National Bird Censuses, and Percentages.

Year	Number Observed in Tri-City Christmas Census	Number Observed in National Christmas Census	Per cent of United States Population In Tri-City Area
1953	46	625	7.3%
1954	5	461	0.9
1955	17	700	2.4
1956	84	605	14.0
1957	31	586	5.3
1958	114	741	15.3

#### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The Bald Eagle presently is a common winter resident along the Mississippi River, concentrated in the vicinity of the chain of dams constructed by the Federal Government. The increase in numbers of wintering and migrant birds apparently first began about 1939 (Allert, 1939). This is a change in status as compared to a summary prepared by Du Mont (1934) where he recorded: "During the past quarter of a century the Bald Eagle has been known . . . only as a spring and fall migrant, and occasionally as a winter resident."

Apparently the conclusion of Orr (1937), that the last nesting record of the Bald Eagle in Iowa was in 1864, is a reasonable one. There are several summer records in northeastern Iowa (Palas, 1938; Weeks, 1934), but there has been a lack of evidence to support recent nesting. In 1939 Oscar P. Allert expressed the belief that nesting Bald Eagles would be found nesting in the Allamakee County area eventually. I should like to share this optimistic belief although it has been ten years since Allert's publication.

I wish to express my appreciation to Frank Bellrose of the Illinois Natural History Survey for the use of his field data, and to William Youngworth of Sioux City for the checking of literature.

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## FALL MEETING AT FORT DEFIANCE STATE PARK

By MYRLE M. BURK

Secy.-Treasurer

On September 12 and 13, 1959, with weather fair, skies clear, and temperature warm, members of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union migrated to Fort Defiance State Park, Estherville, where they were entertained by Mr. and Mrs. Myrle L. Jones. Included in the flight were trips to Spirit Lake and the Union Slough National Wildlife Refuge in Kossuth County.

Members of the Executive Council, Peter Petersen, F. J. Pierce, Lillian Serbousek, J. P. Moore, Myrle L. Jones and Myrle M. Burk, met at the hotel for a short business meeting Saturday evening, September 12. In the absence of Dr. Peter P. Laude due to illness, Peter C. Petersen, Jr., vice president, presided.

The Council decided unanimously to appoint Woodward H. Brown, Des Moines, to succeed the late Bruce Stiles as a member of the Executive Council.

Peter C. Petersen, program chairman for the spring convention at Waterloo, Iowa, May 14 and 15, 1960, reported he had contacted Dr. Walter J. Breckenridge, University of Minnesota, for guest speaker at the annual dinner.

Early comers Saturday evening gathered at the Lodge of Fort Defiance State Park. They listened to the record, "A Field Guide to Bird Songs," which is arranged to follow the sequence of Roger Tory Peterson's "Field Guide to the Birds". Drs. Everett and Eunice Christensen of Spencer showed the film of their flight across western United States from Spencer to the Pacific Coast, also pictures of the Great Plains, the Big Horn Mountains, the wheat fields of Washington, and aboard a Coast Guard boat on the Pacific, from which they visited the homes of birds on a rocky island wildlife refuge.

On Sunday morning the group again assembled at the Lodge for a hearty breakfast of bacon and eggs, rolls, fruit juice and coffee, served by Mrs. M. L. Jones. After breakfast a mist net in nearby shrubbery was visited. Myrle L. Jones demonstrated the removal of birds from nets and discussed their use in banding. Birds caught included a Brown Thrasher, Swainson's Thrush, Tufted Titmouse, Redstart, Magnolia Warbler and Wilson's Warbler.

The party divided into two groups, one going to Spirit Lake and the other to Union Slough National Wildlife Refuge. Although no compilation was made, these birds, among others, were seen: Pectoral Sandpiper, Least Sandpiper, Semipalmated Plover, Wilson's Phalarope, Osprey, Black-crowned Night Heron, Green Heron, Great Blue Heron, Wood Duck, Blue-winged Teal, Shoveler, Mallard.

The picnic lunch at the Lodge marked the finale of the meeting. In the absence of Peter Petersen, Myrle L. Jones and Charles C. Ayres emceed the after-lunch remarks.

Arthur Palas, Postville, extended thanks in behalf of himself and other Charter Members who were awarded honorary memberships at the spring convention. Three honorary Charter Members, Arthur Palas, F. J. Pierce and B. O. Wolden were present.

Mrs. John Lueshen, Wisner, Nebraska, president of the N.O.U., invited Iowans to their meeting. Mrs. G. A. Johnson, Des Moines, reported on the movement for national protection of the Mourning Dove.

A vote of thanks was extended to Myrle and Margaret Jones, whose gracious hospitality made this one of the most happy fall meetings. Mrs. Jones then thanked the neighbors and the members of the Izaak Walton league who had helped her serve.

**Attendance Register.**—CEDAR RAPIDS, Lillian Serbousek, Myra Willis; DAVENPORT, James Lewis Jr., Peter C. Petersen Jr., Mike Yeast; DES MOINES, Ruth Chapman, Mrs. G. Adolph Johnson; ESTHERVILLE, Mr. and Mrs. Myrle L. Jones, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Klema, Mr. and Mrs. B. O. Wolden; MANLY, Patt Lake; MARSHALLTOWN, Mr. and Mrs. Homer Rinehart; NEWTON, Mr. and Mrs. J. P. Moore; OTTUMWA, Mr. and Mrs. Charles C. Ayres Jr., Barbara Greeve, Jean Powell; POSTVILLE, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Palas; SIOUX CITY, Mrs. W. W. Barrett, Mr. and Mrs. Robert L. Nickolson, Gertrude Weaver; SPENCER, Drs. Everett and Eunice Christensen; SPIRIT LAKE, Mr. and Mrs. James Sieh and family; TITONKA, Mr. and Mrs. Harold H. Burgess, Barbara, Mary, and Thomas Burgess; WATERLOO, Myrle Burk, Rodger and D. Thomas Moon; WHEATLAND, Dolly and C. Esther Copp; WINTHROP, Mr. and Mrs. F. J. Pierce; WISNER, NEB., Mr. and Mrs. John Lueshen. Total registered, 48.

## PILEATED WOODPECKER NESTING IN WATERLOO, IOWA

By RUSSELL M. HAYS

825 Franklin Street  
WATERLOO, IOWA

On April 26, 1959, I saw a Pileated Woodpecker beginning to excavate a hole in a large tree beside a backwater of Black Hawk Creek, only a block from heavily traveled Fletcher Avenue, in Martin Woods, Waterloo. During succeeding days I kept close watch of the place and saw the woodpecker often, though I expected it to disappear due to the heavy traffic on the avenue and the number of people fishing near by, but the bird remained. As the cavity got bigger the woodpecker tipped up more and more and its body kept going in farther—until at last, after several days, all I could see was its tail flipping back and forth as it worked deeply into the hole. Finally, I saw just the bird's head moving in the hole. I saw no chips tossed out of the hole for two days and I concluded the excavation was finished. I checked briefly each day to see if the bird was there, but I did not stay long as I did not wish to disturb this unusual resident.

I did not hear more than one bird calling at any one time until May 10, when Mrs. Florence Spring and I were watching at the place and we heard two different calls. On the following day I saw a pair of Pileated Woodpeckers; one bird flew up to the tree while a second one flew out of the hole, so I decided it was now a nesting pair. After a week I believed they might be incubating eggs.

Members of the local bird club were informed of the nesting and they checked the nest site at intervals. On June 2 or 3, they reported actions by the woodpeckers indicating possible feeding of young birds. They were tipping up with tails hitting against the top of the hole.

I spent two hours at the nesting site on June 6. I saw the female woodpecker (no red stripe on lower jaw) enter the cavity three times in two hours. She seemed to be feeding young, as she tipped up and hit the top of the hole with her tail. Only this one bird was present for the two hours.

On June 14 the young were sighted for the first time. Earl Freeman and I saw two young birds appear in the hole when the parent bird returned with food. We now watched from nearly a half block away, and we did not believe our presence influenced the visits of the parents to the young. One parent bird returned about every half hour while we had them under observation. The adult bird twice flew into trees almost over us, so no doubt on these occasions our presence was known to the bird. The young made a high, buzzing noise while the parent was there, but dropped down

from sight at the entrance hole when the parent left. On another watch at the nest only the male bird was seen in two hours.

On June 15, in an hour and a half watching the nesting tree, I saw both adults but no feeding of the young. Earl Freeman and I watched on June 17, when both birds were present and the female was seen feeding at least one young bird three times in a half hour, the fastest feeding yet observed. Dr. C. W. Robertson and I visited the nest site on June 19, and we saw the male feed a young bird. The male was away for an interval of 45 minutes, and we did not see the female in an observation period of two hours. On one return visit the male flew to a large, dead tree just in front of us, and we had a fine view of this great bird after which it went into the cavity and stayed for some time. Observations were continued on June 20, with the adult woodpecker feeding the young at intervals, and a young bird staying in the hole as long as 30 seconds after the departure of the parent. At this time we became fairly certain there was but one young bird; we suspected that the other young had died. One interval in the feeding was only 15 minutes, and the young bird put its head and shoulders out of the hole. After the feeding the adult flew to a nearby tree and preened while the young bird stayed in the hole and begged for food.



ADULT PILEATED WOODPECKER AT NESTING HOLE

(From a photograph taken by F. W. Kent in Jones County, Iowa, reprinted from *Iowa Bird Life*, September, 1955, page 51).

On June 21, Ruth Mahon, Frances Crouter and I spent almost three hours at the nesting site, from 7:30 to 10:30 a.m., without once seeing a parent bird. The young bird was in the hole entrance and almost constantly giving the buzzing call; once it gave a loud, woodpecker cry. I saw the male parent feed the young twice very early on the morning of June 22. I was almost under the nesting tree on this trip and got a close view as the adult woodpecker rammed its huge beak into the young bird's throat in the feeding process. On this morning a Starling lit on the nesting tree and the young woodpecker put its head and shoulders out of the hole and buzzed loudly.

Miss Maxine Schwanke and her mother were at the nesting site very early on the morning of June 23 and saw two feedings. After I arrived I saw two more, at intervals of about 20 minutes. It seems that the most frequent feeding is done early in the morning. The young was now getting noisy, making the buzzing sound and calling at intervals. One young bird was all that we could see at any time. We watched the old male drumming on a dead tree. He would drum vigorously, swing his head back and forth in a wide arc, then drum again. On this date I watched the male rest for a long time on a dead branch over the nesting hole. I saw a spider cross on about 20 feet of silk right under the bird without harm.

On June 24 the young bird had its head well up in the hole all morning and called loudly many times, with no parent coming in an hour and a half interval. When it did come, it was the male and he called loudly in return. The books say the adults are very quiet around their homes, but it was not the case here. The male flew to the right side of the hole so the young had to come out a short way to be fed. I noticed that the young bird was getting quite black in plumage. On some feedings the parent would drop back from the hole and the young would come half way out to be fed. After the feeding the parent would take off for the drumming tree. There would be a loud drumming and then it would fly away on another search for food.

June 25 gave me another two hours of observation, but the young was deep in the hole and very quiet. The parent flew into the dead tree near me and looked very bedraggled as if soaked in the recent heavy rains. The area beneath the tree was filled with surface water and frogs were noisy. There was no calling between the birds. The male flew to the hole and lit several inches below it, making a long reach necessary to feed the young bird. The parent dropped down on the trunk to entice the young bird out, but the latter would not budge so the parent hitched up again for another feeding. The feeding over, the male flew to the drumming tree, hitched its way to the favorite spot, and sounded off as usual.

Another two hours of observation on June 26 revealed further details. There was no action at all for a half hour, no sight or sound of the young. Then the young bird put its head out. A Flicker and a Red-bellied Woodpecker called near by, but the young Pileated showed no interest, evidently being able to distinguish its parents' calls. The male Pileated flew to a dead branch over the hole and the young buzzed loudly. The male gave a squealing call quite different from others I had heard and flew to the hole. The young was fed at once with no luring tried. I saw some fluttering of wings in the hole for the first time, as if the young were trying to fly. A mower came to the park and after a short time the young Pileated became much disturbed. The Flickers were calling loudly at this time, and I blamed the mower for their excitement, but to my astonishment a raccoon came crawling down below the Flickers' nesting hole. I suspected that it had robbed or tried to rob their nest. A Crested Flycatcher got into the act by fluttering in front of the Pileated nesting hole for a few seconds.

A visit was made on June 27, but it was a disappointment. The young had evidently left the nest, and we were unable to find any clue from sight or sound that it was near by. We tried to watch the male Pileated to see if it would lead us to the young, but we were unsuccessful. A thorough search of the woodland tract on June 28 gave the same results. We could not find the young bird and it must have been very well hidden if it was in the area. We had hoped to see the young bird leave the nest, but it had escaped us.

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## BRUCE FLEMING STILES

1897-1959

Bruce Fleming Stiles, Director of the State Conservation Commission since August, 1948, passed away at 7:15 a.m., July 17, 1959, at the Veterans Administration Hospital in Des Moines, Iowa. He did not regain consciousness from the time of lung surgery on July 15.

Born June 23, 1897, at Decorah, Iowa, he devoted the last 21 years of his life as an official in the State Conservation Commission. Appointed as a conservation officer in 1938, he subsequently advanced to Chief of Fish and Game division in 1942, Assistant Director in 1946, and Director of the Commission in August of 1948. In addition to his official duties, he was very active in state, national, and international conservation and wildlife organizations. Among his honors and offices were: President of the International Association of Game, Fish and Conservation Commissioners, president of the Midwest Association of Game, Fish and Law Enforcement Officers, chairman of the Mississippi Migratory Waterfowl Flyway Council, president of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union, 1955-1956, Fellow of the Iowa Academy of Science, member of the National Waterfowl Flyway Council, member of the National Advisory Committee to the Secretary of the Interior on Migratory Waterfowl. He attended President Eisenhower's conference on the fitness of American youth in 1956 at the Annapolis Naval Academy. He received an original etching from the Wildlife Management Institute for services performed and his portrait has been placed in the Deane Collection of Portraits of American Ornithologists in the National Library of Congress. He was a member of the American Legion, Izaak Walton League of America, Blue Lodge A.F. and A.M., and served as Merit Badge Counselor, Boy Scouts of America. He enlisted and served with honor in the U. S. Navy during World War I.

Mr. Stiles is survived by his wife, Alice Heires Stiles, to whom he was married March 31, 1921, one son James Fleming Stiles, Junior medical student at the University of Iowa, and one grandson, Michael James Stiles. Funeral services were held July 20 at the Caldwell-Brien Funeral Home in Des Moines, and were conducted by Rev. DeLoss Marken, chaplain at the Des Moines Veterans Hospital. In accordance with his personal request, his ashes were spread upon Beaver Creek at a point 2 miles west of Herrold, Iowa, July 23. This area was close to his heart because he had enjoyed many happy outings there with his family and friends.

After 16 years of personal friendship and association with Bruce, we feel that the evaluation of his character properly begins with re-stating the fact that progress and advancement by any person in a chosen field are reflections of knowledge and natural ability possessed by that individual. After high school graduation, his education was mostly self-acquired. He pursued selected courses in biology and ornithology under the able and inspiring direction of Dr. T. C. Stephens of Morningside College, Sioux City,





BRUCE F. STILES  
(Photograph taken in 1955)

Iowa. He was endowed with a brilliant intellect and an unfailing memory. Through these he acquired an amazing store of knowledge in the arts and sciences, as well as in his chosen field of service. He could quote scores of classical passages. He was well informed on the subjects of geography, geology, astronomy, history, philosophy, and literature. His many writings are recorded in the literature of conservation and ornithology. He had much to offer as a conversationalist, public speaker, and story-teller. His presentations were orderly, well thought out, and interestingly given without notes. The stories were always timely and well told. His hobbies were fishing, hunting, and bird-watching. Opening days of the hunting seasons were special occasions, and he was constantly a genial companion. Through his broad acquaintances he gave us many other desirable and lasting friendships. His concept of ecology in nature was of depth, especially as it related to conservation. He possessed unlimited faith in the State of Iowa, and was unyielding in his belief that Iowa possessed a lavish proportion of nature's excellence. He sincerely believed in the Supreme Being as Creator and coordinator of all natural phenomena. He was totally honest and consequent-

ly his acts were the result of profound convictions rather than of expediency or sentiment. He was uncompromising in pursuit of his intense persuasions that decisions in the area of conservation must always be made for the overall good of Iowa. Perhaps because of these personal characteristics, his tasks were at times burdensome and uneasy. He has undoubtedly fulfilled well the purpose of his life, and we hope the State of Iowa will be given more men with the stature of Bruce Fleming Stiles.

"The virtues of our brother we inscribe upon our memories, his faults upon the sands."

—DR. AND MRS. HAROLD R. PEASLEY, 2001 Nash Drive, Des Moines, Iowa.

#### GENERAL NOTES

**Prothonotary Warbler in Humboldt County.**—On May 12, 1959, while birding along the East Des Moines River in the Foster's Bridge area about  $4\frac{1}{2}$  miles west of Hardy, I found many migrants including 15 species of warblers. In addition to some of the more common warblers, I observed a male Prothonotary Warbler, the first I had ever seen in north-central Iowa. I first heard this bird singing then found it on a lower branch of a silver maple a short distance above the river. Catherine Osia of Humboldt told me that she once saw this species along the West Des Moines River at Humboldt several years ago. The Prothonotary Warbler is not listed for north-central Iowa in the "Iowa Distributional Check-list" (Iowa Bird Life, Vol. 24, No. 4).—DENNIS L. CARTER, Denver Federal Center, Bldg. 45, Denver 25, Colorado.

**Bohemian Waxwing Records.**—I saw a flock 150 to 200 Bohemian Waxwings feeding in a multiflora rose hedge at the north edge of Spirit Lake on January 25, 1959. I had a Red-shafted Flicker visit my feeding station during the past winter. I had not seen this species in Iowa prior to this.—MRS. B. A. LA DOUX, Route No. 1, Spirit Lake, Iowa.

To the numerous reports of Bohemian Waxwings during the late winter, I would like to add two from my local area. The Story City newspaper carried an item on March 12, 1959, that the Rev. C. L. Fuller of that city had seen 12 of the birds. "They were feeding on the cranberry bushes next door at Art Frandson's," and were closely observed. The Nevada Journal of March 19, 1959, reported that Jack O'Donnell of Colo had seen two Bohemian Waxwings near the O'Donnell Seed Company building, "eating berries from the evergreen bushes." Brooks Beatty, Boy Scout representative, also observed the birds. They lingered around the bushes for two days.—HENRY BIRKELAND, Roland, Iowa.

**Black Vulture in Winnebago County.**—A Winnebago County farmer on August 29, 1959, shot and brought (on August 31) an unusual vulture to my office for identification. The vulture had a shorter tail and shorter wings than the typical Turkey Vulture. Its total length was 24 inches, while its wing-spread was 58 inches. The vulture's head was dark and sparsely covered with short, dark feathers. In checking with Peterson's "Field Guide to the Birds", we had to agree that it had "white wing patches" and the tail was no more than  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the length of legs" as described for the Black Vulture of the south. We theorized that this vulture may have glided up here on the hot, persistent, southwest winds that occurred the last weeks of August. The farmer "shot the huge bird to protect his livestock"! Apparently the vulture had been feeding on a dead sheep as its feet were covered with sheep wool. Unfortunately the vulture was too far decomposed to save as a specimen.—HAROLD H. BURGESS, Refuge Manager, Union Slough National Wildlife Refuge, Titonka, Iowa.

**Brewster's Warbler at Davenport.**—On May 11, 1959, while observing migrating warblers near the lagoon on Credit Island, I was attracted by a call which had the quality of a Golden-winged Warbler's call but was phrased differently. I located the bird and it proved to be a Brewster's Warbler, hybrid of the Blue-winged and Golden-winged Warblers. The bird's plumage was unlike the plate in Peterson's "Field Guide to the Birds" in that it lacked the yellow wash on the side of the breast. Upon reviewing the literature, I came upon an article by Parkes entitled, "The Genetics of the Golden-winged and Blue-winged Warbler Complex," *Wilson Bulletin*, Vol. 63, No. 1, 1951. The bird at Credit Island looked exactly like the bird illustrated in the second figure from the top in Dilger's plate in this article. This bird was termed a back-cross Brewster's Warbler. The call of the bird I observed was almost identical to that of the Brewster's Warbler on the record "Songs of Warblers of Eastern North America", by D. J. Borror & W. W. H. Gunn. It consisted of four "buzzes" on the same pitch, unlike the varying pitch of the Golden-winged Warbler. The bird was observed by Thomas Morrissey and Mrs. Harold Peasley. Morrissey and I totaled 127 species for the day, including 22 species of warblers.—PETER PETERSEN JR., 620 East 30th Street, Davenport, Iowa.

**Report on Two National Bird Meetings.**—I attended the 40th annual meeting of the Wilson Ornithological Society, held at Rockland, Maine, June 11 to 14, 1959. We had a good trip out. I rode with Karl Bartel, Mrs. Amy Baldwin and Jason Walker. Pauline Wershofen and Esther Pieters of Cedar Rapids were also in attendance, as was Mrs. Dayton Stoner, formerly of Iowa. We saw 141 species on the trip, counting roadside birds, with 101 in the Rockland area. We arrived in Rockland on June 9, giving us two days to bird prior to the convention. We went to Acadia National Park and Camden State Park where we found 15 species of breeding warblers. On the Sunday boat trip (when it rained constantly) we got Puffins, Black Guillemots, Razorbills, Arctic and Roseate Terns, Northern and Red Phalaropes, Common Scoter, Brant, Wilson's Petrel, Sooty Shearwater, and some of the party saw a Gannet. The Coast Guard was kind enough to lend the Society the use of a buoy tender free of charge.

Among the more interesting papers were several on the use of radar to track migrating birds, and using a live Screech Owl to attract deep woodland birds out into the open for photography. I plan to try this for mist-net banding. The banquet was excellent, the hotel doing a good job of serving 240 people in three rooms. Dr. Pettingill showed his new Iceland films at the banquet. Members and guests registered totaled 302. We had an enjoyable clam bake one night, but it was quite a task to tackle lobsters with no "tools."

The 77th stated meeting of the American Ornithologists' Union was held at Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada, August 25-30, 1959. I drove to the convention with my mother and Mrs. Dayton Stoner. The local committee had made excellent arrangements and set up a fine program. Dr. Milton Weller of Iowa State University was on the program discussing his research into the parasitic egg-laying of the Redhead Duck. Fred Kent was the fourth Iowan present. An exhibit of Canadian and British bird art was assembled in connection with the convention.

The banquet was provided free of charge by the government of Saskatchewan. The field trip was primarily to observe migrating Sandhill Cranes, about 6,000 of which were observed. We saw 114 species on the entire trip, stopping at several wildlife refuges in North Dakota enroute. Next year's meeting will be at Ann Arbor, Michigan, August 23-26.—PETER PETERSEN JR., 620 East 30th Street, Davenport, Iowa.

**Observations on Water Birds at Swan Lake, Johnson County.**—Swan Lake, after being dry for three years, filled up in 1959 to almost the level of former years and became attractive to water birds, especially to Coots and grebes. A survey by canoe on June 9 disclosed some twenty Coot nests with from three to twelve eggs per nest, one Coot nest with three newly hatched young, five grebe nests with eggs, and a Green Heron nest with two eggs. Perhaps the more open water and its lack of heavy emergent vegetation was more attractive to the Coots than in previous years when only a very few Coot nests were found. And this lack of high vegetation might have been the reason that no Least Bitterns were found this year. Blue-winged Teal and Mallard also nested in the marsh this year, and a pair of Yellow-headed Blackbirds were seen into early July, very unusual in this location. Also rare were Sora Rails and American Bitterns in this area through the summer.

The outstanding feature of the season was the Ruddy Duck, with up to a dozen seen continuously from May 26 until October 16 on some 30 trips to the marsh. From June 19 to July 12, there was much display activity—puffing, chasing, diving, and especially that curious slapping of the bill against the breast. After this period separate pairs and males, apparently patrolling, were observed. On July 5, while we were looking for nests from a canoe, one male persisted in patrolling a small area, bobbing and slapping while he swam back and forth. We were near enough to hear the sounds he made, and when we pressed in too close, he took to diving without leaving the area. Several other trips were made in the marsh by canoe and with hip-boots to find nests but without success. It was not until August 8 that we had evidence of nesting, when we found a female with five young. We watched as the little birds dived quite expertly. Several broods of four or five were seen well into September. One brood of five on September 17 were still quite



FLOCK OF YOUNG TEAL.

Almost grown but still "in line" in the same order as they swim when quite small Swan Lake, July 12, 1959. (F. W. Kent photograph).



RUDLEY DUCK PATROLLING

Swan Lake, July 5, 1959. (F. W. Kent photograph)

small and always seen in the same small area—but the vegetation by then was so heavy it was luck that we saw as many as we did. Males with the broods were not observed. Our last observation was on October 16, of five almost full grown young.—FRED W. KENT, 7 East Market Street, Iowa City, Iowa.

**Bad Weather Brings Good Birding to Des Moines.**—The snow of November 12, 1959, and the cold weather immediately following, brought three rare visitors into the city. On November 15, Mary E. Peck, her mother and sister, sighted a Whistling Swan in the far west part of Waterworks Park. This park is along the Raccoon River just southwest of downtown Des Moines. The swan flew in front of them twice and then flew toward the river. The swan was observed the next day by Mrs. Harold Peasley and Dorothy Anderson. It did not fly but stayed in open water at extremely close range.

Also on November 15, five members of the Des Moines Society sighted two Oldsquaw ducks on Gray's Lake, which is just across from Waterworks Park. The ducks were identified with spotting 'scopes and appeared to be changing into winter plumage. Both ducks were females. During the next two days other members of the society saw the Oldsquaws. On November 16, Dr. Robert Norton identified a female Common Scoter on Gray's Lake, and this was also observed by members of the Des Moines Society on the following day.

On November 10, the Redpolls returned to Des Moines after a year's absence. Before the winter of 1958-1959, these birds were fairly regular winter visitors to this area. They were not here last winter but in November of 1959 a flock of 25 to 30 returned to the birch trees in Glendale Cemetery. The Redpolls were usually found feeding on the catkins of the birch trees, and often there were a few Goldfinchs with them.—LYNN WILLCOCKSON, 2806 Thirtieth Street, Des Moines, Iowa.

**Pileated Woodpecker in Henry County.**—A Pileated Woodpecker was seen along the Skunk River on the P. H. Millspaugh farm, in Henry County. This is northwest of the town of Rome, Iowa. I observed the bird as he flew across the river to light on a limb almost above me. When he was challenged by the presence of a Red-headed Woodpecker, he flew on up the river and gave out some loud notes. The flashing white wing patches were very conspicuous as he flew. My son also saw the bird. It was about 10:30 a.m., and the date September 13, 1959.—D. D. MILLSPAUGH, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa.

**Bird Records at Shenandoah.**—May 15, 1959, was our big warbler day. Watching them in the yard of a friend was very easy as there were always some in the bird bath. Among many others we were astonished and delighted to see a pair of Lazuli Buntings. We saw them first at the bird bath, then as they went back to the trees we had a second thrill—we counted five Blue Grosbeaks with the buntings. And if that weren't enough, my daughter, Jean (Mrs. F. M. Braley) had a Yellow-breasted Chat that spent most of the afternoon in her bird bath and the bushes adjoining.—MRS. ROBERT I. BORDNER, Keenan Apartments, Shenandoah, Iowa.

**Marsh Birds at Eagle Lake Park.**—On July 13, 1959, Miss Irene Smith of Des Moines and I spent three hours between 8 and 11 a.m. at Eagle Lake Park in northern Iowa. We had seen a Virginia Rail there three days before, and hoped to get another view of it. The light had been so flattering to the rail we almost thought it was a King Rail.

On this date we did not see the Virginia Rail, but from the numerous pig-like grunts in the marsh, we suspected a Sora Rail was near by, and eventually it came out of the reeds, giving us a good view.

Our big thrill came later. A Florida Gallinule with three young was on the shore when we returned from a hike on a nature trail. The family disappeared into the reeds, and soon we heard sounds of a noisy battle. Suddenly out scampered the three fat, black youngsters with the parent in pursuit. She pecked vigorously at one young one in particular as she chased them back into the reeds. Presumably they were nesting in Iowa, as the young were not old enough to fly.—RUTH M. CHAPMAN, 1077 Twenty-third Street, Des Moines, Iowa.

**Bird Notes from Ogden.**—On July 15, 1959, I saw an all-white Barn Swallow while I was windrowing oats. I had no way of telling if it was a true albino, but its head, wings and tail were pure white while the rest of its body was white with a decided pinkish, salmon-colored overcast. It was with several other normal colored swallows which seemed unaware of its conspicuous presence. I had a good chance to observe it as it swooped down to get the insects flushed by the tractor or windrower, sometimes being only a few feet from me. This was the second white bird I have seen. I saw an albino Horned Lark in 1950, as reported in Iowa Bird Life, March, 1951, issue.

I had an exciting birding year in 1959. We had much rain in the spring, with many ponds in our fields as a result. One pond was about an acre in size, and one afternoon as I went out to check an overflow I was greatly surprised to see a solitary Avocet and a flock of Black-bellied Plovers, as well as Killdeer and Yellowlegs. I am well acquainted with Avocets, having seen them in Texas, but this was my first sight of one in Iowa. The Black-bellied Plovers allowed me to come within 30 feet of them before they flew, so I could make a positive identification. The Avocet seemed reluctant to take wing, and waded from one side of the pond to the other as I drew near. Next day the Avocet was gone, but the Yellowlegs stayed two more days, until the pond disappeared.—JIM KEENAN, Ogden, Iowa.

**Records from Silver Lake.**—On May 15, 1959, I made a brief but very profitable stop at the south side of Silver Lake in Dickinson County. I was pleased to find four Eared Grebes near shore, but a Western Grebe farther out on the lake was a great surprise. I also saw a raft of about 60 Ruddy Ducks on the lake. An interesting assemblage of shore-birds was present along the lakeshore. I identified 10 species including 3 Spotted Sandpipers, 2 Willets, 3 Lesser Yellowlegs, 1 Pectoral Sandpiper, 8 White-rumped Sandpipers, 12 Least Sandpipers, 1 Dunlin, 4 Semipalmated Sandpipers, 1 Hudsonian Godwit, and 3 Wilson's Phalaropes.—DENNIS L. CARTER, Denver Federal Center, Building 45, Denver 25, Colorado.

**Blue-winged Warbler at Sioux City.**—The Sioux City area is near the edge of the migration route of many of the eastern warblers, and as a result many of the rare ones are not often seen. Some will be seen only a few times in a lifetime of observing, others only once or twice, and a few not at all. Such is the status of the Blue-winged Warbler in my record book. On August 25, 1959, a warbler of this species was noted at our bird bath where it bathed and preened for some minutes. My last record of this warbler was in the spring of 1930, when on April 30 I was unsuccessful in trying to collect the bird.—WILLIAM YOUNG WORTH, 3119 East Second Street, Sioux City, Iowa.

**J. H. Paarmann.**—It is the feeling of the staff of the Davenport Public Museum that the article by James Hodges (1959) does an injustice to the memory of J. H. Paarmann. Hodges states: "It was obvious after examining these two pieces of source material (Paarmann 1903 and Pammel 1929), that Paarmann was not very familiar with the area bird life—perhaps more prone to rely on the opinion of others than his own observations."

The first work of Paarmann (1903) was prepared "for the use of Bird-Study Classes of the Davenport Academy of Sciences" and its full title was "A Preliminary List of the Common Birds of Davenport and Vicinity." Since this list was not written for the bird student but for school children and on their level, it can hardly be compared with Wilson's and Schaefer's articles in the *Wilson Bulletin* and the *Illinois Audubon Bulletin*, respectively.

Paarmann's 1925 manuscript, listed by Hodges as unpublished, was published by Pammel (1929). This list specifically omits "the water birds, game birds, and birds of prey." Despite the omission of this large group of species, Paarmann still lists 58 breeders and 77 migrants, as compared with Wilson's (1906) list of 67 breeders and 75 migrants including all species.

We do not argue that J. H. Paarmann was the best observer in the Davenport area in the period 1900-1925. We do feel he was familiar with the area bird life and that his untiring efforts in the field of education and popularizing ornithology entitle him to more respectful treatment and that he should not be mentioned in a slighting manner.

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*Wilson Bulletin*, 18: 1-11.  
 —PETER PETERSEN JR. and DONALD G. HEROLD, Director, Davenport Public Museum, Davenport, Iowa.

**Swainson's Hawk Nesting in Humboldt County.**—As I have already reported in *Iowa Bird Life* (Vol. 28, No. 2, pp. 45-46), I first found the Swainson's Hawk in Humboldt County during the spring of 1957. On the morning of May 12, 1959, I visited the Foster's Bridge area where I had previously found the Swainson's Hawk. While walking along the East Des Moines River north of the bridge (Grove Township, section 3), I saw a hawk soaring low over the tree tops. I momentarily lost sight of it, but in a few minutes I saw it fly in and alight on a nest. The hawk had no sooner settled down on the nest than it apparently saw me and flew off again. I recognized the bird as a Swainson's Hawk when I saw it on the nest. I later observed it in flight and perched on a dead tree and noted all the field marks of this species. The nest was placed in the main crotch of an ash tree about 40 feet above the ground. The nest tree was growing in the river bottom a few yards from the river. The nest was constructed of twigs and small branches and contained some green leaves, indicating recent additions to it. I was unable to climb to the nest to determine its contents. I returned to the nest site about five o'clock in the afternoon. The hawk again flew from the nest and alighted in a dead tree across the river for a few minutes before flying away. It was impossible for me to return to the locality again, but I did obtain this scant evidence of nesting.—DENNIS L. CARTER, Denver Federal Center, Bldg. 45, Denver 25, Colorado.

**Color Selectivity in Nesting Material of a Baltimore Oriole.**—On May 11, 1959, when a female Baltimore Oriole was seen searching for nesting material in our yard, I placed several pieces of white yarn approximately 12 inches long on our clothesline. By the next morning they were gone so I again draped white yarn from the clothesline and low branches of an adjacent tree. By 2:30 p. m. she had taken 10 or 12 pieces so I decided to experiment and try to determine if this oriole preferred white to colored strings, as I had read some birds did.

I placed several red and turquoise pieces and only a few white strips on the line. The oriole then began collecting yarn from the tree where there were still white pieces exclusively. After five trips the supply of white yarn was exhausted and I placed red yarn lengths in the tree, only to see the oriole fly to the clothesline instead on her next trip. There she selected a turquoise piece, dropped it and flew to the ground for a white string. On her next trip she flew to the tree and that was the only time I saw her touch a red string. She selected a red length, discarded it, and selected another but was frightened away.

For five days I watched as this oriole selected her nesting material (although she continued building for a longer period of time), and she invariably flew away with white or pale blue yarn that was hardly distinguishable from white. She often picked a white strand from an assortment of colors all in a row, or she expertly snatched white from a massed group of yarn, but to my knowledge she never used the red, blue, turquoise, green, brown or purple yarn available. If no white yarn was available, but only the darker color, she took no yarn but searched in other places for material instead.

Once when I had put out greater than usual quantities of white yarn with smaller amounts of dark yarn, the oriole seemed almost confused with the abundance—selecting and discarding first one white piece, then another, as if unable to decide which to use.

My experiment proved that this one female Baltimore Oriole, at least, preferred white nesting material to the darker colors.—MRS. CARL PROE-SCHOLDT, Liscomb, Iowa.



**New Birds added to "Birds of Union Slough National Wildlife Refuge RL 195."**—A summary from the above leaflet lists 183 species in the March, 1959, Iowa Bird Life. Since then the following birds have been added: King Rail, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Least Flycatcher, Sedge Wren, Gray-checked Thrush, Solitary Vireo, Philadelphia Vireo, Black-and-white Warbler, Tennessee Warbler, Nashville Warbler, Magnolia Warbler, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, Bay-breasted Warbler, Blackpoll Warbler, Ovenbird, Northern Waterthrush, Yellow-breasted Chat, Canada Warbler, Leconte's Sparrow, Clay-colored Sparrow and Lincoln's Sparrow. This makes a total of 205 bird species identified on the refuge. Copies of RL 195 are available upon request.—HAROLD H. BURGESS, Refuge Manager, Union Slough National Wildlife Refuge, Titonka, Iowa.

**A Broad-winged Hawk Flight.**—The Broad-winged Hawk, while an occasional summer resident and regular migrant in upper Missouri River valley, has not been seen by this observer in any numbers until the fall of 1959. Prior to September 20, 1959, I had seen a few Broad-wings drifting over, but apparently the big flight was destined to go over on the fine, clear day of the 20th. From early morning to late afternoon, I watched the sky with binoculars, except for a quick milk or coffee-break. During that time I counted more than 75 Broad-wings. The main flight was over by early afternoon, but I stayed at my post and was rewarded by seeing 10 Sharp-shinned Hawks and one lone Marsh Hawk. On September 21, just one straggling Broad-wing drifted by and this flight was over.—WILLIAM YOUNG-WORTH, 3119 East Second Street, Sioux City, Iowa.

**Bird-banding at Union Slough Refuge.**—During 1959 an effort was made to band as many Wood Ducks as possible at Union Slough National Wildlife Refuge. This project was carried out by the refuge manager and Student Assistant Elwood Martin. Trapping began in July and continued into September until the Wood Ducks abandoned our bait for new field corn, after 109 Wood Ducks had been trapped. We were especially interested in the return of a male woody that we had trapped as a juvenile in September, 1958, and the recovery of another male Wood Duck that had been banded as a juvenile at the Mingo National Wildlife Refuge, Puxico, Missouri, in October, 1958. In addition we banded six Common Gallinules that were captured in our cloverleaf Wood Duck trap.

We also banded 13 nestling Mourning Doves, one Black Tern and one Yellowthroat during routine refuge operations in 1959.

During the fall we cooperated with mist-net trapping crews from the Davenport Public Museum and Fort Defiance State Park. On September 12 and 13, 1959, Peter Petersen, Jim Lewis and Mike Yeast of Davenport, Iowa, mist-netted 1 Sora Rail, 1 Mourning Dove, 4 Black-capped Chickadees, 3 Catbirds, 1 Brown Thrasher, 1 Swainson's Thrush, 1 Solitary Vireo, 1 Red-eyed Vireo, 1 Black-and-white Warbler, 1 Nashville Warbler, 1 Yellow Warbler, 12 Common Grackles, 1 Cardinal, 1 Lincoln's Sparrow and 3 Song Sparrows—banding 33 birds of 15 species.

On September 20, 1959, Myrle Jones mist-netted 1 Catbird (previously banded by Peterson on 9/13/59), 2 Swainson's Thrushes, 1 Red-eyed Vireo, 2 Ovenbirds, 1 Yellow-throat, 1 White-throated Sparrow and 1 Song Sparrow—banding 9 birds of 7 species. Mist-netting operations resulted in the addition of 6 new species to the refuge list.—HAROLD H. BURGESS, Refuge Manager, Union Slough National Wildlife Refuge, Titonka, Iowa.

**Winter Mockingbird at Mount Vernon.**—Mrs. Ennis called my attention to a "strange bird" in our yard south of the house on the afternoon of November 15, 1959. Without the aid of a binocular it was easy to identify the characteristics of a Mockingbird. The general size and shape, the wing-bars, and particularly the white wing patches (in flight) were clearly noted. When first seen it was near our bird bath, which in winter is used as a feeder. It slipped into nearby shrubbery for a few minutes before flying away. This is probably the first Mount Vernon winter record of this species, although Mrs. Scobey had a Mockingbird around her house for several days one summer. On November 22 Martha-Jo Ennis and I observed a Mockingbird in the same location, and on December 21 David Ennis and I saw a Mockingbird in Penn's orchard, back of our home. The three sight records were probably of the same individual bird.—J. HAROLD ENNIS, Cornell College, Mount Vernon, Iowa.

**Hail to the Crabgrass!**—Most of my neighbors abhor the lowly crabgrass. Some of them spend endless hours pulling it, until they have huge mounds of the stuff. Others spend goodly sums on high-priced mixtures of common arsenic and low-priced fertilizers, which are sold as a cure-all for killing crabgrass.

In my case I let it grow. I like to have the wild birds about too much to worry about crabgrass. It is an endless source of pleasure, during the fall migration especially, to watch the various species of birds as they feed on the seed of crabgrass. Of course, neighborhood House Sparrows are the first to feed on the new crop. They start in August on the green seed. Usually the next feeders are Field Sparrows, already on the move. During September Chipping Sparrows drift in to feed, and usually toward the end of the month, the so-common Clay-colored Sparrow of spring, feed here in very small numbers. Sometimes, on a day in late September or early October, my crabgrass patch has Chipping, Clay-colored and Field Sparrows all at once. And to complicate matters, if an immature Chipping Sparrow should be in the patch, identification becomes a bit of a problem.

During September and October, moving Harris' and White-throated Sparrows feed heavily on crabgrass seed. Juncos, Lincoln's and Song Sparrows also like to join the company. The House Sparrow is, however, the heaviest feeder on crabgrass seed and will work at it until the snows of winter cover it.

The climax of the crabgrass season comes long before the feeding season is over, when on that rare day in the first part of October we are watching the crabgrass patch, as the Chipping and Field Sparrows are feeding. We hear that musical little twitter, "teel-wet," and it stops our train of thought with a rude jolt. We mutter to ourselves that this is only the first week in October and winter and dread cold can't be so near, but that call with the birds yet unseen has frozen us to our observation post. We begin to recall cold, crisp, November pheasant hunting days, when the same sweet call gave us a lift. We recall, too, bitter-cold field trips in mid-winter when the same sweet, twittering call almost made us love the friendly little Tree Sparrow!

So goes the tale of our crabgrass patch, which I have been nurturing more than 30 years. Next spring the sturdy bluegrass and clover will leap up with renewed vigor in the lawn. Comes July and crabgrass is on its way. By August most of the verdure is hidden by the crowding late-comer. Soon come the birds. The pleasure they give us offsets all the ugly brown patches caused by the first frost. So long live and hail to the crabgrass!—WM. YOUNGWORTH, 3119 East Second St., Sioux City, Iowa.

## NECROLOGY

**Mrs. Marie Dales**, a 39-year member (joined 1929) of Iowa Ornithologists' Union, died at Sioux City on April 5, 1959. She was born at Boone, Iowa, December 29, 1871, and lived in Sioux City more than 60 years of her life. About six years of her later life were spent at Spokane, Washington, and Miami, Florida. She became a member of the Sioux City Bird Club shortly after its organization, and was made an honorary member about 1946, in recognition of her contributions to bird study. Her work as a bird-bander was well known. She began banding in the early 1920's, and in September 1934 (according to information published in "The Dickcissel," Sioux City Bird Club journal) she had banded 3,622 birds of 46 species. She had many interesting records of birds returning to her traps year after year. She was a member of the Unitarian Church and was buried at Odebolt, Iowa.—F. J. P.

**Mrs. J. Ray King**, a member of Iowa Ornithologists' Union from 1933, died at a Grundy Center hospital on October 10, 1959. She was born, Helen Gould, on December 23, 1884, at Jefferson City, Missouri. When two years old she moved with her family to Atlantic, Iowa, where she graduated from the Atlantic High School in 1905. She was graduated from the State University of Iowa in 1910, and following that she taught English and German in the high school at Thermopolis, Wyoming. In 1914 she was married to J. Ray King and went to reside on the King farm 2 miles west of Grundy Center, where she lived until the time of her death. She became ill in January, 1959, and was under doctors' care until her death. She is survived by her husband.

Mrs. King was a past president of the Grundy Center Woman's Club and the Garden Club, and was a member of the D. A. R. and National Audubon Society. Many years ago, upon the suggestion of a guest in her home, she established a bird sanctuary on the farm, to which many rare and unusual birds have been attracted. Always very enthusiastic in her hobby, she did a great deal to interest other people, and many troops of Boy and Girl Scouts visited her home over the years to watch birds from her windows.—MRS. JOHN M. BARLOW.

## RECENT BIRD BOOKS

**THE BIRDS OF THE SASKATCHEWAN RIVER, CARLTON TO CUMBERLAND**, by C. Stuart Houston and Maurice G. Street (Saskatchewan Natural History Society, Regina, Sask., 1959; paper binding, 8½x5½ in. size, pp. i-vi+1-205, with maps and other illus.; price, \$1.50).

In the fast lengthening list of regional bird publications, we are glad to welcome this new addition. The senior author is one of our personal friends, incidentally. The book's rather small size belies the great amount of information it contains. It is printed in rather small type with narrow margins on the page.

One of the opening chapters discusses the early naturalists and their work in the region. History as regards early ornithological endeavor is always interesting, and the authors have made a fine coverage. The extent of this work by the pioneers in ornithology will be a revelation to most readers, who will become familiar with such names as Samuel Hearne, Dr. John Richardson, Sir John Franklin, Thomas Drummond, Thomas Wright Blakiston, Eugene Bourgeau, Roderick Ross MacFarlane and many others. There is a chapter on bird-banding mentioning the work of several banders in the region. Another chapter describes the physical features of the area.

The annotated list of 259 species takes up 164 pages of the book. The treatment is quite complete, giving the status of each species and the num-

erous records in the region. This portion of the book is a model of thoroughness and attests a mountain of work and painstaking detail. The authors and publishers are to be congratulated for an important and well printed publication—a valuable contribution to the literature of our science.—F. J. P.

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An interesting and valuable report on "Food Habits of Migratory Ducks in Illinois," by Harry G. Anderson, has been published by Illinois Natural History Survey, Urbana. (Bulletin Vol. 27, Article 4, pp. 287-344, 18 illus., price 50c). The same publishers have also brought out a fine volume entitled "A Century of Biological Research in Illinois" (Bulletin Vol. 27, Article 2, pp. 81-234, many illus.)

Colonial Publishing, Inc., 10 Thacher Street, Boston 13, Mass., has published a "Bird Watchers' Date Book," with calendar pages for dates and an accompanying page with a drawing of a characteristic bird and a description of it; half of this page is left for "Bird notes this week." It is an attractive desk book that sells for \$1.65.

#### MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Norwood Hazard, formerly of Davenport, is now working at the Buffalo (N.Y.) Museum of Science as Curator of Photography. He is under the direction of Fred Hall, who was Director of the Davenport Public Museum for several years. Both men are well known to our members.

Our Vice President, Peter Petersen Jr., reports that he was quite active in bird-banding during the past fall; he netted about 500 birds, mostly at Pine Hill Cemetery in Davenport. Among the more interesting records, he banded a Parula Warbler on September 20, and different individuals of Saw-whet Owls on October 5 and November 4, 1959.

Several of our members wrote letters of congratulations on the special Cedar Rapids Bird Club Issue. We are glad to quote from these letters.

Mrs. Walter Barrett: "When my Iowa Bird Life came today I was so enthralled with it I almost forgot to eat lunch and was late turning on the football game, even! The general effect was practically that of a third IOU meeting, with greetings from all the 'regulars'. You must have really enjoyed putting it together." Mrs. Darrell M. Hanna: "Just a note to congratulate you and the Cedar Rapids Bird Club on the fall issue. It was so very interesting—and such a fine account of the people whom we have learned to regard as friends. Of course, we enjoy and keep all Iowa Bird Life issues, but this one we'll treasure even more." Mrs. W. C. DeLong: "The September issue of Iowa Bird Life is very interesting. The color photograph is beautiful. We can be proud of our magazine." Russell Hays: "Just a few words to congratulate you and all the Cedar Rapids folks for the fine issue of Iowa Bird Life. That Prothonotary Warbler is one of the most beautiful pictures I have ever seen. It was a great treat to read about the history of the Cedar Rapids birders."

#### MEMBERSHIP DUES

are payable January 1st and should be sent to our Treasurer, Dr. Myrle M. Burk, Route 2, Waterloo, Iowa. It will lighten her work if you send your dues without waiting for her to mail you a formal statement.

The membership roll, which we print at about two-year intervals, was planned for printing in this issue but was crowded out. We expect to have it in our March issue. We hope to include the names of many new members, and we would much appreciate your efforts toward getting your bird student friends to join us.